

**MASKED BOBWHITE**  
**(*Colinus virginianus ridgewayi*)**

**STATUS:** Endangered (32 FR 4001, March 11, 1967; 35 FR 8495, June 2, 1970) without critical habitat.

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** Males are characterized by a brick-red breast and a black head and throat. Females closely resemble other races of the species and are essentially indistinguishable from the Texas bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus texanum*).

**HABITAT:** Found in desert grasslands at 300-1,200 m (1,000-4,000 ft) elevation with a high diversity of moderately dense native grasses and forbs and adequate brush cover. This subspecies has been found to be closely associated with unarmed acacia (*Acacia angustissima*), apparently using the seeds as a major food in winter, fall, and early spring.

**RANGE: Historic:** Occurred in grasslands throughout most of Sonora, Mexico, and the Altar and Santa Cruz valleys of Pima and Santa Cruz counties, Arizona. It inhabited the Sonoran savanna grasslands, the Sonoran desertscrub, and the Sinaloan thornscrub of extreme southcentral Arizona and adjacent central Sonora, Mexico.

**Current:** Extirpated from the United States around 1900. A refuge population and captive rearing was established in 1985 at Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in the southern Altar Valley in Pima County, Arizona. In 1996, Buenos Aires' masked bobwhite population was estimated at 300-500. Three very small natural populations still persist in central Sonora, Mexico, consisting of fewer than 1,000 individuals.

**REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY:** Endangered as a result of the loss and deterioration of habitat due to overgrazing and possibly due to competition with other native species of quail. Tolerates only light grazing of its habitat.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona.

**NOTES:** A Recovery Plan was completed in February 1978 and revised in 1984 and 1995. A copy of the recovery plan is available online at:

<http://arizonaes.fws.gov/Documents/RecoveryPlans/MaskBobwhite.pdf>

Listed as a Species of Special Concern by the State of Arizona.